DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91125

SOME METAPHORICAL TYPES MET WITH IN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

Louis Breger

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ABSTRACT

This essay explores the "unconscious" meaning of the metaphors in which psychoanalytic theory is stated. In other words, the psychoanalytic method of interpretation is turned back on the theory itself. Considered are Freud's theories of sexuality, pleasure-unpleasure, masculinity-femininity and the metapsychology. The roots of these theories are located in Freud's intellectual "childhood" in a nineteenth-century system of values and traced from that source through major portions of his later work.

SOME METAPHORICAL TYPES MET WITH IN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY[1]

Louis Breger

I. MIND AS METAPHOR

The human mind can be represented in many ways. We imagine it as a place behind our eyes, hear it as an internal voice, talking silently to ourselves, picture it with the visual images of dreams and fantasies, and feel and sense it in other ways. We speak of psychological experience as occurring in "the mind" though "it" is certainly not a thing. Common usage employs all these metaphors of locating, picturing and hearing, derived from the various sense modalities. Psychologists and psychoanalysts rely on many of these same metaphors and use, in addition, symbols and analogies from other fields. The mind is described as a machine, a steam engine or telephone switchboard in the past or a computer, processing information, today. Biological analogies are employed: the mind as a "creature" that takes in nourishment in the form of stimuli and digests, assimilates or incorporates it. Still another biological metaphor is taken from the theory of evolution and embryology: mind as developing "organism" moving through stages of increasing complexity and organization. And then there are physical and architectural images, mental "structures", "levels" of thought,

"upper" and "lower" regions.

The mind and its qualities--psychological experience in the broad sense--is only known, and certainly can only be talked about, with some set of metaphors; we cannot get at "it" except with some form of symbolic representation. It is essential to note that psychological experience is inseparable from the system of metaphors with which it is represented. Many ways of representing such experience are possible and each has its appeal, its usefulness, its advantages and limitations. Metaphors of the mind are both creative and determining, expansive and constricting, conscious and unconscious, for as we open possibilities with a new form of representation we inevitably close off others.

The many metaphors that Freud uses in psychoanalytic theory have been noted by different commentators and continue to be the subject of debate. Sometimes he locates the mind in physical space, consciousness is "above" and the unconscious "below", with a "barrier" of repression in between. An early model represents the perceptual apparatus as a sort of camera with a filing cabinet behind, "it" records perceptions of reality which are then stored in the file of memory from which they may later be retrieved. Or consciousness is a "searchlight" focused on a small part of the unconscious. One of the best known metaphorical systems is that blend of hydrodynamics, electricity, sex and emotion: libido theory, with its "forces," "excitations," and "energy" flowing into "objects" or collateral channels. And then there are the well known metaphors with human actors: the id, the ego and the superego. Later versions of these

anthropomorphic images postulate different representations of early relationships: "inner" fathers and mothers, "introjects" and "internal objects."

As he created and developed psychoanalytic theory over the years Freud used a variety of metaphors to represent psychological experience. It is typical of his style as a theorist that images and metaphors from different fields are mixed together. This is particularly true of the theories of motivation which are stated in several overlapping languages: the force and energy metaphors of libido theory; the drive-tension-release of the pleasure principle; the many versions of instinct; sexuality, aggression, ego instincts, life, Eros and death. In addition, these different languages are blended and terms such as energy, pleasure, tension or death used in both a technical-theoretical and an everyday sense. Often Freud is aware of the metaphorical, speculative and tentative character of his theoretical constructions, though sometimes he seems not to be. And there is nothing inherently unscientific, irrational or unconscious about theory stated in this form, indeed as I have stressed, the mind can only be represented metaphorically. But, while many ways of representing psychological experience are possible, once theory becomes tied to a particular metaphorical system, it may become trapped in the images, assumptions and values of that system. To take a widely known example: metaphors of the mind as a machine, and this includes a fancy modern machine like a computer, may be useful in work that relates, say, memory or perception to neurophysiology. But such models may prove inadequate, if not dangerously misleading, in dealing

with more complex human actions and intentions. Some of Freud's quasi-mechanical metaphors have been troublesome in just this way.

While many of the metaphors of psychoanalytic theory represent the creative search for new forms of representation, some of them have also come to serve as repositories of old assumptions and values. And there are aspects of the theory that can only be understood as unconscious, that carry a burden of repressed meaning from the past.

II. CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS METAPHORS

In Some Character Types Met With in Psychoanalytic Work, the essay whose title I paraphrase here, Freud explains the behavior of three "types": "the exceptions," "those wrecked by success," and "criminals from a sense of guilt." In each case, what seems like a senseless or self-defeating adult action is shown to be the unconscious reenactment of a pattern carried over from childhood. Consciously committing a crime for gain, a criminal makes foolish mistakes which betray his unconscious wish to be punished. The whole drama of crime, capture and punishment can be, as Freud shows, a reenactment of a script written in the past. This is the model that Freud employs to explain a great range of phenomena: neurotic symptoms, character problems of many kinds, the latent meaning of dreams, slips, errors and the mistakes of everyday life. All involve the symbolic or metaphorical expression of conflict that the person is not aware of.

But what, more precisely, does it mean to call these forms of expression unconscious? In the main line of psychoanalysis this has,

for the most part, meant that they are like neurotic symptoms. Freud's discoveries of the many ways in which conflicts are unconsciously expressed occurred in a particular historical order that shaped the way these insights were later used. The discovery of the unconscious meaning of neurotic symptoms came first and assumed a special significance as defining model for the forms of interpretation that followed. Dreams--which Freud once called "little defense neuropsychoses"--jokes, slips of the tongue and, later, works of fiction, drama and art, were all interpreted within the framework first developed to decode symptoms. Unfortunately, in the enthusiasm to extend the insights about the unconscious, to decode symbols of all sorts, important differences were sometimes blurred or lost. A dream is not a symptom nor is a novel or play a neurosis, though one can use insights from the study of neuroses to illuminate such creative works. The failure to note differences has led many psychoanalysts to speak as if it were symbolism, metaphor, fantasy, disguise or primary process thinking themselves that are pathological rather than the particular uses to which these forms of expression are sometimes put. In other words, we must distinguish between non-neurotic and neurotic forms of symbolic expression, between what I am calling conscious and unconscious metaphors.

Let me approach this distinction with a simple example. If I say that my mother-in-law is "a pain-in-the-neck" I am using a common metaphor to show my dislike, my anger or to comment on the trouble she causes me. If someone asks me if she really makes my neck hurt, I say no, that's just a figure of speech. I can, with ease, distinguish the

literal from the metaphorical level and, when I do so, step outside my own discourse and comment on it. I am aware--conscious--or can easily become aware, of the feelings expressed by the metaphor. Now, imagine a young woman, trapped in an intensely ambivalent relationship with her mother, with a great need for love and much frustration and rage who is unable to express these feelings directly for fear of losing the very person whose care she needs most. She develops a severe pain in her neck, is taken to doctors and specialists, where it is eventually diagnosed as "emotional," or a "psychiatric problem." To her, of course, the pain is only too real; it hurts, disrupts her life, its origin and cause are a mystery, calling it emotional or psychiatric gives no relief. If the young woman of our example were able to enter therapy or psychoanalysis it might eventually be revealed how her symptom--(like Anna O's paralyzed arm or Dora's cough) was a metaphorical expression for the complex emotional relationship with her mother, that it expressed the "pain" of her rejection, was a way of communicating her anger at mother--"you see how you make me feel and none of your doctors or ministrations are of any help!"--while simultaneously expressing guilt and self-punishment. The pain-in-the-neck of the young woman, in contrast to that of my figure of speech, fulfills all the criteria of a neurotic symptom as unconscious metaphor.

Using these two "pains-in-the-neck" as examples, it is possible to state the criteria that define an unconscious metaphor. First, the young woman's symptom is quite simply not conscious; she is unaware of the meanings expressed by her pain; the metaphor is

experienced literally, is unrecognized as a metaphor, and attempts to interpret its meaning meet with incomprehension amd resistance. We might say that her pain disguises and hides as it communicates while the figure of speech simply expresses meaning in a creative form. These two ways of communicating are related to the distinction that Freud noted long ago between preconscious and unconscious, between the metaphor whose meaning is easily recognized and accepted and that which is strongly resistant to interpretation. Second, because the young woman is trapped at the level of literally experienced metaphor, she cannot get outside her immediate frame of reference, cannot see herself and her situation in more than one way. Just as she cannot comment on her ambivalent relationship with her mother, so she cannot take the point of view of an observer in regard to her symptom. Third, since the meanings of the symptom are unconscious, and since she cannot get outside a definition of herself in symptomatic terms, the disguised conflicts are not modified by further experience. In more familiar psychoanalytic terms we say she is fixated, the unconscious conflicts are timeless, they are unaffected by later reality testing. She cannot, for example, become intimate with someone other than her mother, or express anger and find she is not overwhelmed with guilt because, in her own view, these are not her problems: she suffers from a pain in her neck. Finally, unconscious metaphors such as this become determining; symptoms and related neurotic character problems come to express major aspects of the person's life. The neurotic struggles with <u>them</u>--pains, phobias, perverse fantasies, depression--rather than with the interpersonal

conflicts that were their antecedents.

The whole process of the development and maintenance of unconscious metaphors, of a neurotic way of life, may be summarized as follows: the infant or young child is confronted with interpersonal conflicts which arouse painful and threatening emotions: anxiety, guilt, depression, frustration and rage, threats to self-esteem. When a solution of such conflicts is not possible in reality the child turns to unconscious modes of conflict resolution; he develops symptoms, retreats into fantasy, acquires inhibitions or the forerunners of a particular character style. These unconscious modes give symbolic, disguised or metaphorical expression to the conflict while providing some protection from the threatening emotions. The whole process may continue more or less directly through childhood or remain latent until adolescence when adult demands and opportunities--for sexual intimacy, assertive independence, the assumption of adult roles--reactivate the original conflicts. Once activated, the old unconscious solutions are again brought into play; the neurotic continues to act as if the sexual, assertive or independent encounters of his adult life contain the dangers of childhood. Since the whole process is cut off from awareness, the solutions, necessary in childhood, are now endlessly repeated, unmodified by the opportunities for change of a new reality. When we are able to successfully modify such a pattern in psychoanalytic therapy, the latent or unconscious meaning of the neurotic symbols and metaphors are understood in new ways, personality development is reopened and more satisfying modes of conflict resolution and interpersonal encounter can be achieved.

These distinctions between conscious and unconscious metaphors draw together well known psychoanalytic ideas. I summarize them here so the reader may have them clearly in mind for use in the discussion of theory that will follow.

III. PSYCHOANALYZING PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

For purposes of discussion, let us group together a set of interrelated ideas covering: sex and its many forms of expression, major portions of the metapsychology and theory of instincts, libido theory and related concepts concerning pleasure-pain, masculiniy-femininity and activity-passivity. All these ideas continue to be the subject of critical discussion and revision. There have been thorough analyses of the influence of Freud's nineteenth-century neurological assumptions (Amacher, 1965; Holt, 1965, 1976) and proposals to align the theory with modern neurology, information and systems theory (Rosenblatt and Thickstun, 1977). Bowlby has carried out a major reassessment and reformulation of instinct theory (1969, 1973, see especially 1973, Appendix II for a discussion of the pre-Darwinian character of Freud's conception of instinct.) There are detailed critical analyses of Freud's theoretical language and proposals to replace it with a language better suited to human actions, intentions and experience (Klein, 1976; Schafer, 1976). Feminist critics offer valuable analyses of his ideas about women, male and female identity and related issues (Miller, 1973; Mitchell, 1974). And the specific theories about sexual disturbance and masculinity-femininity have received cogent reformulation (Stoller, 1975, 1979). These many lines

of criticism and new theory are extremely valuable in delineating logical and empirical problems and suggesting new lines of approach.

Yet something more is needed; the more I read Freud on instinct, pleasure, sexuality, Eros and death, the more I am struck by the way the metaphors of these theories are both creative and unconscious, how they simultaneously express new theoretical insights and indirectly perpetuate old prejudices. Let me discuss just one example at this time: the concept of libido. Freud uses libido to refer to the sexual energy that drives or motivates a diversity of actions, thoughts and fantasies.[2] Crucial to his use as a theoretical metaphor is the idea of a reservoir of energy, energy that can assume different forms, that can "flow" into many "channels" or, in a related use, that can "cathect" different objects, fantasies or parts of the person's own body. The metaphor of libido sometimes evokes an image of fluid in pipes, channels and dams, at other times electric current in neurons, wires and condensors. It is clearly meant to refer to experiences of sexual arousal and release, as in orgasm, but also refers, more broadly, to the drive-like quality of love, desire and related emotions which can "build up," "overflow," or be "released." Freud uses the metaphor of a mobile, displaceable, transformable energy to tie together and explain a variety of human motives and acts that, before his work, appeared unrelated. The somatic symptoms of hysteria, the repetitive acts of the compulsive, the choice of particular love objects, the obscure images of dreams and the release of laughter at a joke are all related to the course followed by a fluid sexual energy which assumes different forms as it encounters the

"barriers" of reality, repression and conscience. A number of contemporary critics have pointed out that the hydraulic and electrical metaphors are misleading; they argue that the phenomena in question are better described by theories of information processing or symbolic transformation. These arguments are well taken, but such concepts were not available to Freud in the 1890s. He made creative use of images and metaphors borrowed and adapted from the science and neurology that he knew. Such use is typical of theory construction in many fields and, in itself, does not detract from the usefulness or validity of a new theory. And the metaphors of libido do capture some, though not all, aspects of some people's sexual and emotional experience.

But there are other ways in which the metaphors of libido theory constitute a "return of the repressed," ways in which the very sexual prejudices and conflicts that Freud unmasked were unintentionally incorporated into his new theories. I will briefly note three of these here, fuller documentation will be provided later. First is the assumption of an economics of libido, the idea that sexual energy, or love, exists in a fixed quantity within the person and, if discharged in one way, is unavailable for other purposes. There is an obvious sense to this; one only has so much time and effort for sex, love or anything else. But the economics of libido implies more, it carries over nineteenth-century "moral"-religious strictures regarding sexual "saving" and "spending." Second, the equation of pain with energy buildup and pleasure with the discharge, or even absence, of inner energy is derived from earlier images of the

menacing quality of sexual arousal and feeling. And, third, the view of the specially pathological quality of "passive libido" was one of many ways in which prejudices against women, and qualities associated with femininity, were carried forward. In each of these cases, the metaphors of libido operate like the unconscious symbols of a neurosis; they express conflicts from the past in disguised forms.

These examples are part of a larger trend within Freud's theories of sexuality, instinct, pleasure and masculinity-femininity. In all these areas, one finds metaphors that express a return of the repressed. Like the neuroses that Freud taught us to understand, this unconscious version of theory has its roots in an earlier time of life: Freud's intellectual "childhood" in the late nineteenth-century. Like an unconscious fantasy, again, this side of the theory is expressed in metaphors which disguise or obscure its meaning. In this disguised form it has been timelessly repeated, little modified by contact with the reality of new clinical observations.

Clearly, what is called for in a case like this is psychoanalysis! The various demonstrations of logical and empirical problems have shown what is wrong with the theory but it will only be "given up" when its underlying motives and purposes are recognized. To state this in another way: the psychoanalytic method seeks to explore and understand the symbolic world of the patient. I suggest that we turn the method back on the theory, that the metaphors of the theory can be analyzed in the same way we analyze dreams, symptoms and transference reactions.

In what follows, I will use the model of psychoanalytic interpretation to clarify the unconscious metaphors of its own theory. We will begin with an account of the "family background": Freud's intellectual "childhood" in the nineteenth-century. The ideas, assumptions and values concerning sex, pleasure, emotion, women and related topics will be outlined and traced into his early hypotheses as we now know them from the Fliess correspondence of the 1890s. We will then see how these ideas were transformed into an abstract theory which, like the metaphorical language of a neurosis, cut them off from their roots and from reality testing. Finally, we may entertain some speculations as to why this sphere of theory continues to be the source of unresolved conflict.

IV. SEX IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

We owe much of our understanding of "Victorian" sexual repression to Freud and it is one of the paradoxes of the present analysis that he, who played such a central role in liberating us from the sexual prejudice of his time should, in certain of his theories, show the lingering effects of this same prejudice. Yet that seems to be the case. Let me describe, in a most summary fashion, some features of the period.

Recent historical evidence suggests that European society of the past few hundred years has undergone cycles of repressive and permissive attitudes toward the treatment of children, the expression of emotion, sexuality and related feelings, and the definition of male and female roles.[3] The eighteenth-century was, in many ways, a period

of relative permissiveness and individualism. Toward the end of that period there occurred a revival of "moral reform" characterized by: 1) the assertion of paternal authority; 2) a repressive orientation toward emotional expression, play, and, of course, sexuality; 3) a stress on the innate sinfulness of infants and the imposition of harsh discipline to control the child's lust, will and other dangerous proclivities and; 4) an ambivalent or "split" view of women as, on the one hand, largely without passion or sex and, on the other, as overly sensual creatures. This interrelated set of values and practices was associated with the rising middle class; the nobility, the upper classes, the peasants and the poor did not, initially share in them. But, of course, as the nineteenth-century progressed it was precisely this bourgeois morality that came to prevail.

Different explanations have been offered for the rise of repressive morality. Marx tied it to the ascent of capitalism and the exploitation of the proletariat, what Max Weber later called "the protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism." Taylor relates the recurrence of patrist values to the rise of "the trading middle class" and Stone notes the return of Evangelical piety during a period of stressful social and political crisis. Foucault (1980) argues that sex was not simply repressed but appropriated by the state which forced it into new forms of controlling discourse, subjecting it to the "endless mill of speech." The specific explanation for the prominence of these values need not concern us here, what is clear is that historians from a variety of perspectives agree on the main features of the period. What, in a bit more detail, was the Victorian

moral system?

The authority of the father within the family was buttressed by the belief in a severe male God who kept track of the sinful transgressions of his children. As the power and status of fathers and men were exalted, those of mothers and women were depreciated. Woman's place was in the home, her task to serve men; this was an era--as writers in the woman's movement have again called to our attention--in which the rights of women were at a low ebb. In addition to laws and social practices which restricted the opportunities and activities of women there were values which stigmatized a set of qualities associated with femininity--emotional expressiveness, "softness," playfulness--and glorified qualities associated with men--aggression, competition, discipline. Men's attitudes toward women and these "feminine" qualities were intensely ambivalent. Women were needed and feared, glorified as romantic caricatures and sought out in the streets as prostitutes, viewed as lacking in passion, sex or emotional power and felt as threatening sources of sexual-emotional temptation.

The moral system was inculcated early in life by practices based on the belief that infants contained sinful potentials which had to be curbed. Male doctors displaced midwives in the supervision of pregnancy and birth and advised mothers on child care. Many beliefs and practices interfered with the establishment of a secure mother-infant bond; infants were given out to wet-nurses and nannies,[4] wrapped in constricting swaddling clothes, plunged in cold baths to "toughen" them and subjected to harsh punishment and deprivations

meant to stamp out their sexual and willful--that is, autonomous--potentials. It was not an easy time to be a child; many of the recommended practices can only strike the contemporary reader as child abuse.

Sexuality became the focus of a particular moral frenzy; it is here that we approach the more specific forerunners of Freud's ideas. The new bourgeois morality stressed frugality, control--of emotion, expressiveness, sperm--and discipline, it abhorred "spending" which had both a sexual and economic meaning. Stone notes that

> the most valued of Victorian characteristics was respectability, which took the form of moral asceticism, buttressed by Evangelical piety and reinforced by patriarchy. [He notes, further, the prevalence of] . . . reticence, sobriety and thrift, punctuality, self-discipline and industry, chastity, prudery. . . . [1977, p. 678]

Sexual "spending" was taken quite literally; quasi-medical views were blended together with religious-moral doctrines into a conception of "energy"--sexual, vital, or experiential. A man had only so much of this vital energy and too much sexual activity could drain it away. As Barker-Benfield notes in his aptly titled "The Spermatic Economy: a nineteenth-century view of sexuality" (1978) there was a widespread belief in pangenesis; each part of the body was thought to contribute a fraction of itself to sperm by way of the blood. This idea was buttressed by Lamarck's now discredited theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, a theory that Freud

himself never quite gave up. "Energy" was used in the broadest sense: "vigor," "vitality," "vital powers," the "moving active spirit" of male accomplishment. And doctors, moral experts, and religious leaders all agreed that this energy shoul not be "spent" in sex if men were to pursue their rightful goals: success, the conquest of nature and the making of money.

Masturbation was a special danger; nineteenth-century attitudes and practices about it are among the more bizarre creations of the male mind. (See Comfort 1967; Hare 1962; and Spitz 1953 for reviews.) Masturbation was widely believed to cause most forms of mental disturbance--melancholia, hysteria, neurasthenia, delusions, hallucinations, suicide and insanity--and a good number of physical diseases as well--epilepsy, memory loss, feeble-mindedness, exhaustion, poor vision. The medical and quasi-medical literature was filled with advice on how to break children of this dangerous habit; threats of castration were common as were various mechanical devices that tied down the hands or made touching the genitals painful. In extreme cases, circumcision and even clitorectomy and castration were recommended. One had to guard against a variety of temptations: reading poetry, staying in bed too long in the morning, lounging about, bad posture, or too much contact with women on things deemed feminine. All these could lure one into the evil habit that "spent" the vital-sexual energy. Some typical examples follow.

Smith-Rosenberg (1972) describes nineteenth-century views on the hysterical women

> Hysteria could also result from a secret and less forgivable form of sexuality. Throughout the nineteenth-century physicians believed that masturbation was widespread among America's females and a frequent cause of hysteria and insanity. . . . Masturbation was only one form of sexual indulgence. A number of doctors saw hysteria among lower class women as originating in the sensuality believed to characterize their class (670-671).

Masturbation had an ever-present potential to drain away a person's vital energies. Baker-Benfield quotes Brigham, an American authority writing before 1850, on the

> fundamental law of the distribution of vital powers . . . that when they are increased in one part, they are diminished in all the rest of the living economy . . . to increase the powers of one organ it is absolutely necessary that they should be diminished in all the others (1978, p. 375).

Both masturbation and woman had a special attractive power that men were cautioned against. An aroused woman's mind was easily dominated by her sexual organs. As Barker-Benfield notes

> All women were potentially antagonistic to the fundamental value scheme of society. Female masturbation was universally attacked on the grounds that it raised women to a state of sexual craving, that is, it made her a threat to men (p. 384).

These views were part of the more encompassing ideas about energy-economics

> The discharge of sperm, it was generally believed, "obliterated," "prostrated," and "blotted out" all of "the energies of the system." Instead of "concentrating" those energies onto the nonsexual end of success, the masturbator concentrated what was left of them onto his penis and testicles. "All the remaining energies of animal life seem to be concentrated in these organs, and all the remaining power to gratification left is in the exercise of this . . . loathsome and beastly habit. [The quotes are from a Boston physician writing in 1835, p. 377.]

The historians I have been citing draw on American and English sources though they note that European experts shared the same views. One of the most widely read "experts" in German was Doctor Daniel G. M. Schreber, father of Daniel Paul Schreber, the subject of Freud's famous study of paranoia. Doctor Schreber's views on the horrors of masturbation--he, like many others, referred to emissions of semen as "pollutions"--his recommendation of harsh discipline in infancy, and his fanatical stress on control of emotion, the body and all its functions, displays all the repressive features of his English-speaking contemporaries. (See Schatzman, 1973, Breger, 1978.) I think it safe to conclude that this interlocking set of "moral" beliefs, including the specific ideas about the economics of vital-sexual energy--were diffused throughout the social world in which Freud grew up. Not everyone lived in accord with them, to be sure, but they defined the ways in which most aspiring bourgeois citizens felt they <u>should</u> live.

It is probably hard for the reader today to appreciate the pervasiveness and hold of these ideas. They dominated Western views of sexuality, pleasure, women and discipline for one hundred years or more; they permeated literature, particularly children's literature, and were backed by the authority, not only of religious leaders and secular "experts," but by the most prominent medical and scientific men of the times. And these included Freud's teachers and mentors.

V. FREUD'S "BIOLOGICAL" FANTASY LIFE

It is one of my central theses that Freud was deeply influenced by this system of beliefs and that its values and specific images shaped one line of his ideas about sexuality, masculinity-femininity and the nature of instinct. This is the line found in the metaphors of libido, the pleasure principle and the metapsychology. The other line is the more popularly known; it is the trend associated with the liberation of sexuality from repression and guilt. While this second line defines the mainstream of psychoanalysis, the first remains alive, albeit in disguised form.

Freud's letters to Wilhelm Fliess during the years 1887-1902 give us a unique glimpse of psychoanalytic theory in the process of creation. Most of the great discoveries are there in one form or another, along with many false starts and mistaken guesses. A central idea, and one retained to the end, of course, concerned the connection of sexuality and neurosis. But how were they connected? The Fliess letters show that certain of Freud's earliest ideas did not differ in their basic outline from the views of other nineteenth-century moral

and medical experts. In 1893 he asserts that

> Neurasthenia in males is acquired at the age of puberty and becomes manifest in the patient's twenties. Its source is masturbation, the frequency of which runs completely parallel with the frequency of neurasthenia in men. [All quotations are from the Fliess correspondence, Freud, 1954, p. 68.]

Earlier in this same draft he speaks of "early sexual exhaustion" and, before beginning a discussion of "abnormal sexual life," cautions Fliess: "you will of course keep the draft away from your young wife" (p. 66).

There is much speculation in these early letters about "sexual noxae," abstinence, coitus interruptus, too much, too little or the wrong kind of sexual release, all of which are thought to produce anxiety, depression, neurasthenia, or other symptoms. These views seem to be mainly an attempt at a "scientific" version of bourgeois morality. They do not differ from those of the mid-nineteenth century physician William Acton--an influential authority--who felt that any form of sex outside of marriage was dangerous and that, within marriage, intercourse should be limited to no more than once every seven to ten days least the husband's vital energies be impaired. In a letter of 1893 Freud states "I have come to the opinion that anxiety is to be connected, not with a mental, but with a physical consequence of sexual abuse." A footnote refers to his 1895 paper on anxiety neurosis in which he writes:

> In the first place it was surmised that we are here dealing with an accumulation of excitation; secondly, that there was the exceedingly important fact the anxiety, which underlies all the clinical symptoms of this neurosis, is not derived from any psychical source (p. 80).

Note how the "sexual abuse" of the letter is now the more scientific sounding "excitation" in the published paper, a transformation that will become increasingly frequent. In a draft of 1894 he blends together ideas about sexual energy with "the theory of constancy," the hypothesis that the nervous system is governed by the tendency to seek a constant state through the discharge of excitation or energy. Freud's earlier training in physicalist-neurology had left a strong commitment to this idea and it persisted to the end of his work, undergoing various transformations. In one form it appears as the pleasure principle and in another as the death instinct. Here is how the constancy principle was linked to sexuality and neurosis in 1894

D. Points of Contact with the Theory of Constancy

Internal and external increase of stimulus: constant and ephemeral excitation,--summation a characteristic of internal excitation. Specific reactions. -- Formulation and elaboration of the theory of constancy--the part played by the ego in the storing-up of excitation.

E. The Sexual Process in the Light of the Theory of Constancy. Path taken by the excitation in the male and female sexual processes. -- Path taken by the excitation under the influence of aetiologically operative sexual noxae. -- Theory of sexual substance. . . .

F. Mechanism of the Neuroses

The neuroses as disturbances of equilibrium due to increased difficulty in discharge . . . (pp. 87-88).

We see, in this draft, the way Freud is beginning to mix together nineteenth-century moral ideas about vital-sexual energy whose "discharge" must be carefully managed (the metaphor here is clearly the discharge of sperm in ejaculation, the "sexual substance"), with a theory about the "discharge" of neural excitation. The next draft speculates about sources of anxiety in "coitus interruptus," "virginal subjects," the "deliberately abstinent," men who "force themselves to carry out intercourse though it is beyond their desire or strength," in sum, as he puts it, ". . . we are dealing with . . . an accumulation of physical sexual tension. The accumulation is due to discharge being held up. Anxiety neurosis is thus, like hysteria, a neurosis due to dammed-up excitation" (p. 90).

Other neuroses are similarly explained. In 1895 he speculates that "melancholia can arise as an intensification of neurasthenia as a result of masturbation." And, later "thus in melancholia there is probably a question of loss--a loss in the subject's instinctual life . . . Melancholia consists in mourning over loss of libido"[5] (p. 103).

And, in a later draft that same year: "migraine represents a toxic effect produced by the stimulus of the sexual substance when this cannot find adequate discharge" (p. 117).

These quotations should be sufficient to show that one line of Freud's thinking on the role of sexuality in neurosis was a direct continuation of widespread nineteenth-century ideas. In some instances his hypotheses are the same as those of earlier moral-medical experts, for instance his views on the damaging effects of masturbation. At other times he tries to do more; many of his hypotheses are attempts to relate specific neurotic conditions to specific forms of sexual discharge. In other words, he doesn't assume that all sex drains one's vital powers; though some can, one can also suffer from insufficient "discharge" or a "damming up" of "sexual substance." While his ideas are more complex than earlier theories they nevertheless rest on the same view of a dangerous, threatening sexual energy whose expression must be carefully managed least anxiety, depression or sickness result.

There is, of course, another line of theory alive in the Fliess correspondence, the line that develops into what most would agree are Freud's principal contributions; the psychoanalytic theory of neurosis and the concepts of repression, resistance and defense; many ideas about the unconscious, and the symbolic expression of unresolved conflicts. The correspondence is also a partial record of Freud's self-analysis with Fliess as unwitting transference figure. All these different trends coexist. While the passages I have quoted are fairly direct expressions of conventional sexual prejudice, in

other places the writing has a tentative character as Freud moves from old to new positions. Much of what he says about sexual conflict during these years can be seen as aligned with conventional sexual views or as part of his new, critical psychoanalytic perspective. Here is a passage from his 1898 paper "Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses" which shows the coexistence of both lines of thought:

> Masturbation is far commoner among grown-up girls and mature men than is generally supposed, and it has a harmful effect not only by producing neurasthenic symptoms, but also because it keeps patients under the weight of what they feel to be a disgraceful secret. . . . If physicians knew that all the while the patient was struggling against his sexual habit and that he was in despair because he had once more been obliged to give way to it, if they understood how to win his secret from him, to make it less serious in his eyes and to support him in his fight against the habit, then the success of their therapeutic efforts might in this way well be assured.

We see the persisting assumption that masturbation produces symptoms, but also the emergence of another view, that it is not the physically dammed up sex but the meaning of sexual activity--the feeling that it is "a disgraceful secret"--that causes the disturbance. Within this new framework, the physician's task is, in part, to alleviate guilt, to, "make it less serious in his eyes." In other words, we see the beginnings of what will become the main line of psychoanalytic thinking and therapy, a line that Freud vigorously

pursues in the next few years in such works as The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901), and Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious (1905). The expression of the old "moral" prejudice fades in these works based on the self-analysis, dreams, the direct observation of cases, slips of the tongue and jokes. Yet, there are remnants. The theory of anxiety remains unclear for many years; as late as An Autobiographical Study of 1925 he still speaks of "actual neurosis" in which anxiety presumably results from the direct conversion of sexual excitation (no such case is ever described), and a final clarification is not accomplished until 1926 with the publication of Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety.

Freud's views on women also reveal the lingering effects of nineteenth-century beliefs. Women are thought to have weaker super-egos than men; they are viewed as more corruptible by passion and instinct. Thus, in the 1915 "Observations on Transference Love" he speaks of "Women of elemental passionateness who tolerate no surrogates. They are children of nature who refuse to accept the psychical in place of the material. . . ." [pp. 166-167]. And, in Civilization and Its Discontents he describes how

> Women soon come into opposition to civilization and display their retarding and restraining influence--those very women who in the beginning, laid the foundations of civilization by the claims of their love. Women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life. [1930, p. 103-4]

These passages are not far from that earlier image of Woman as sexual temptress, luring the male from his rightful, productive work.[6]

These ideas about anxiety and women are remnants, however; they are peripheral to the core of psychoanalytic theory based on clinical work and direct observation. Freud, after all, opened the new profession of psychoanalysis to women at a time when this was quite a radical step. And when one reads a late case such as "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920) his analysis does not rest on any of these outmoded ideas; indeed his perception of the effects of prejudice against women in the creation of the young patient's disturbance is quite sharp.

The principal source for the continued expression of the values, assumptions and images of Freud's intellectual childhood is in what I am calling his "biological fantasy life": the metapsychology, libido theory, the economics of pleasure and the permutations of instinct. It is here that we find the most pervasive effect of these old prejudices, the more powerful because of the indirect or metaphorical form in which they are expressed. Thus, while his views on women, homosexuality, or variations in sexual practice become increasingly free from their "moral" male-centered origins (see the very fair-minded discussion of "sexual aberrations" in the first of the Three Essays or the Theory of Sexuality for example), the metaphorical version of this same prejudice remains unchanged. One sees it, for instance, in the pathological power attributed to "passive (feminine) libido" or its variants "passivity," "masochism" or "latent homosexual impulses" in men. In the case of Schreber

(1911) this menacing, "inner," feminine sexuality is seen as root cause of a psychotic breakdown (see my 1978 paper for a discussion of different interpretations of the Schreber case).

Let us now turn to two of Freud's key metapsychological papers, On Narcissism: An Introduction (1914) and Instincts and Their Vicissitudes (1915), for a more detailed exploration of the way in which old assumptions are carried forth in disguised form. One can see the persistance of old images clearly in Freud's ideas about the economics of love. In On Narcissism he states "We see also, broadly speaking, an antithesis between ego-libido and object-libido. The more of the one is employed, the more the other becomes depleted" (1914, p. 76). In other words, the more you love yourself the less love you have for others. This seems a fairly direct transformation of the idea, discussed earlier, in which self-love (masturbation) depleted one's vital energies leaving none for other activities. And it is a direct descendent of a host of ideas on saving and spending with which nineteenth-century moralists were preoccupied. Much of the theory in the Narcissism and Instincts papers is more complicated than this, though at base it rests on the persisting view of a menacing sexuality.

In both essays, Freud begins by outlining a conception of instinct in terms of "stimuli," "reflexes," "energy," and "discharge," while, at the same time, describing these instincts in a language that animates and humanizes them. Thus, in the 1915 paper, the "nervous system" has the "task . . . of mastering stimuli" (p. 120); instincts "exert pressure" and have "aims" which may be "passive" or "active"

(p. 122); and these "aims" are directed to "objects" which may be other persons or parts of one's own body (p. 123). In the 1914 paper he speaks of "an indifferent psychical energy which only becomes libido through the act of cathecting an object" (p. 78). These examples may be taken as descriptions of a mechanical system but the style--the words and images--leave them open to an anthropomorphic interpretation. For it is we humans who have "tasks" to be "mastered," whose lives are filled with "aims" and "purposes," who are sometimes "active" and at other times "passive," and who seek satisfaction in others ("objects") and our own bodies.

Psychic energy, libido and its various routes to investment and discharge are metaphors for human emotional experience, especially the experience of sex and love. And the metaphors express, in their symbolic way, a conventional set of assumptions. Thus in Instincts and Their Vicissitudes Freud speaks of "stimuli" from the "outer world" which impinge on "living tissue" which acts to "discharge" such stimulation. This describes the relationship between organism and reality. "Instincts" are also "stimuli," but they have a different origin; instincts are "stimuli to the mind." That is, Freud makes the distinction between stimuli which arise outside the organism (reality) and those which arise within, equating instincts with this second group. Since they arise within us, we cannot escape them. Instinct,

> Never operates as a force giving a momentary impact but always as a constant one. Moreover since it impinges not from without but from within the organism, no flight can avail against it. (S. E., vol. 14, p. 118).

And later

> It (the organism) will be aware of stimuli which can be avoided by muscular action (flight); these it ascribes to an external world. On the other hand, it will also be aware of stimuli against which such action is of no avail and whose character of constant pressure persists in spite of it; these stimuli are the sign of an internal world, the evidence of instinctual needs. (p. 119).

A bit further, Freud restates the basic tendency of the organism

> The nervous system is an apparatus which has the function of getting rid of the stimuli that reach it, or of reducing them to the lowest possible level; or which, if it were feasible, would maintain itself in an altogether unstimulated condition. (p. 120)

These quotations point up certain essential underlying assumptions: nature, and our own nature, are both against us. "Reality" is pictured as "stimuli" which irritate the organism, who attempts to flee from it. Nothing is said about stimuli of an inherent attractiveness that the organism is drawn towards. Instinct is the inner "reality" and it, too, is an irritant from which one seeks escape. (Where are inner sensations of pleasure?) But since it is "inside," escape is impossible. Pleasure consists in the absence of stimulation. Instinct is a "force" that "impinges . . . no flight can avail against it." Thus instinct, even more than reality, is an

ememy.

Our instincts--and sex is the main referent here--are against us; they disturb our peaceful-pleasureful state and we strive to escape them. They arise from our bodies as "stimuli upon the mind"--irritants--and thus our bodies too are against us. Such "instinctual force" is likened to an external reality which, while not as persistently irritating, is still a potential disrupter of our happiness. Thus, the embattled organism is besieged by hostile forces from within his own body and from the outside world; one might almost call this a persecutory version of human nature.

It is worth noting that there is a second line of thought in both the Narcissism and Instincts papers. In both essays, the metapsychological formulations appear in the beginning and homage is paid to physiological reductionism; that is, there are attempts to link "libido" with the biological function of sexuality and the hope is expressed that some day all will be explained in "scientific," terms. But as the essays progress, these trends fade and the main focus of Freud's interest becomes clear. On Narcissism is a discussion of the course of human love, particularly the complex interplay between love of self and love of others. It contains much more as well: ideas about schizophrenia, the origins of conscience and the development of male and female identity--all topics that cannot be reduced to physiological mechanisms or energies. Instincts and Their Vicissitudes deals with closely related themes and turns, in its later sections, to a discussion of the course of love and hate, and the ambivalence characteristic of intense human relationships. If

the early version of instinct suggested that a "biological" metapsychology, taken literally, was of little use to Freud's central concerns, the later sections make clear what these concerns are. And they make clear, as well, that the "biological" language is almost wholly metaphorical, it is a symbolic representation of human emotion and relationship.

The basic image of "instinct" as an antagonistic force runs through the major metapsychological works. It underlies the concept of pleasure as getting rid of something: stimulation, excitation, sexual substance: (". . . unpleasure corresponds to an increase in the quantity of excitation and pleasure to a diminution," (Beyond the Pleasure Principle, p. 8). This concept of pleasure as the absence of stimulation does not fit most human experience: the pleasure of eating when hungry or drinking when thirsty, aesthetic pleasures, the joy of exercise and sport, of music amd dance, of humor, or even sexual pleasure, all of which involve certain qualities and patterns of stimulation rather than their reduction or cessation. (See Klein, 1976 Chapter 6, and Holt, 1976, for more detailed discussions.) The metaphorical power of Freud's idea primarily rests on one aspect of male sexuality: ejaculation, yet even there it is not really a matter of diminution or conservation but rather a shift from one qualitative state to another. The underlying metaphorical power of the pleasure principle and related ideas of conservation of libidinal energy primarily rests on their expression of nineteenth-century "moral" notions of sexual spending and saving.[7]

The concepts of libido, instinct, energy, discharge, the pleasure principle--much of what is termed metapsychology--are often viewed as the parts of psychoanalytic theory closest to biology and science.[8] I think, rather, that they are its most speculative aspects, farthest from observations of any kind. These concepts can better be thought of as part of Freud's biological fantasy life. In the discussion so far, I have stressed the way in which these speculative ideas are a return of the repressed, how the metaphors of theory give disguised expression to the very nineteenth-century views that Freud was moving beyond. But a theoretical fantasy, like a dream, is an arena where ideas and assumptions can be expressed in fluid and creative ways. The biological fantasies also served Freud in a creative fashion; with this set of flexible metaphors he experimented with theory as he made the transition from the assumptions of his past to new psychoanalytic insights. As an illustration consider the following passage from The Ego and the Id:

> It can hardly be doubted that the pleasure principle serves the id as a compass in its struggle against the libido -- the force that introduces disturbances into the process of life. If it is true that Fechner's principle of constancy governs life, which thus consists of a continuous descent towards death, it is the claims of Eros, of the sexual instincts, which, in the form of instinctual needs, hold up the falling level and introduce fresh tensions. The id, guided by the pleasure principle--that is, by the perception of unpleasure--fends off these tensions in various ways. It does so in the first

> place by complying as swiftly as possible with the demands of the non-desexualized libido--by striving for the satisfaction of of the directly sexual trends. But it does so in a far more comprehensive fashion in relation to one particular form of satisfaction in which all component demands converge--by discharge of the sexual substances, which are saturated vehicles, so to speak, of the erotic tensions. The ejection of the sexual substances in the sexual act corresponds in a sense to the separation of soma and germ-plasm. This accounts for the likeness of the condition that follows complete sexual satisfaction to dying, and for the fact that death coincides with the act of copulation in some of the lower animals. These creatures die in the act of reproduction because, after Eros has been eliminated through the process of satisfaction, the death instinct has a free hand for accomplishing its purposes. Finally, as we have seen, the ego, by sublimating some of the libido for itself and its purposes, assists the id in its work of mastering the tensions. (1923, p. 46-47).

I defy the reader to make sense of this passage as logic or reality oriented discourse. "The pleasure principle serves the id . . . in its struggle against the libido . . ." but libido is what constitutes the id, which is governed by the pleasure principle. And then it is "the id" that "fends off" the tensions introduced by Eros, which is equated with the sexual instincts. But, isn't the id the reservoir of the sexual instincts? And what can "non-desexualized libido" be, a direct sexual feeling? Then why the double negative?

The four characters in conflict in this passage--the id, Eros, the pleasure principle, and sexuality--are never defined independently of one another. Indeed, as those familiar with psychoanalytic theory will recognize, in other works these terms are defined in interchangeable and overlapping ways. There are additional problems with the passage: the abrupt switch from a metaphorical to a concrete image of sexuality ("discharge of sexual substances"); and the way human fantasies that link sexual satisfaction with dying are equated with the literal death, in the act of reproduction, of simple organisms. Shifting levels of definition, image and referrent occur throughout The Ego and The Id, particularly with the concept of instinct. One minute it refers to relatively specific actions--sadism, scoptophilia--and another to the broadest of forces: life and death. At some points instinct seems to have an adaptive meaning in the Darwinian sense and at others to be non-adaptive, anti-person and anti-life. The sexual instinct is at times Eros, associated with a binding together, with love and life, and at other times the id, the "seething cauldron" of impulses ever threatening to erupt. And, as the quotation reveals, sexual discharge can lead to death: those "vital powers," again drained away.

It is difficult to make logical sense of a passage like this but, if we treat it as a dream, as a specimen of Freud's biological fantasy life, it becomes understandable. He is experimenting with two views of sexuality, one associated with threat, tension and death and the other with pleasure, love and life. If the quoted passage is read in this way, one can see it as part of the continuing movement toward

a positive valuation of sexuality, love and feminine-maternal qualities that characterizes the larger course of Freud's work. This is the direction taken by the late essays, especially the final chapters of Civilization and Its Discontents.

VI Instinct Theory from a Sense of Guilt

I began this essay by asserting that mind and psychological experience are inseparable from the metaphors in which they are represented. I have tried to show that what Freud viewed as the most scientific and biological of his theories are, in fact, infused with a set of metaphors whose evocative power rests on their connection with conventional nineteenth-century ideas about sex, masturbation, the body, emotion and women. It is helpful to recall that from the 1890s onward Freud's observations were of persons (including himself), fantasies and dreams, emotional reactions and relationships. He did not keep up with neurology and physiology but much preferred to read Goethe, Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, history and anthropology. Thus, while he continued to write about the "nervous system" and its "excitations," he actually worked with persons, free associations and subjective experience; the theory could posit a "depletion of libidinal energy," what was observed with sadness and depression; he could speak of "object cathexis," "narcissistic libido," or the "eruption of id impulses," what was seen was love of others, of oneself and the experience of emotion--sexual, aggressive -- as a dangerous inner force.

Freud used a set of metaphors, adapted from his earlier work in biology, and blended with various commonsense and experiential

meanings, to conceptualize his new psychoanalytic observations. The metaphors express the way sexual feeling, the body, masculinity-femininity and emotion were experienced by many of Freud's patients and contemporaries, no doubt by himself, and by many of us still. Most middle-class children in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were raised in a way that induced a profound belief in the scarcity of physical affection and the dangers of sexual stimulation. If you were weaned early, shifted back and forth between your mother and substitute caretakers, wrapped in swaddling clothes and a profusion of other garments, constantly stopped and disciplined when "touching yourself," and generally expected to behave like a polite little man or woman from the earliest years on, how could you feel otherwise about pleasure, emotional expression, sex, or your body? Sex was a dangerous inner force that "impinges . . . no flight can avail against it" and "libido" was scarce.

Of course, to say that the metapsychology, the theory of instinct and libido, do capture certain truths about the way sex was experienced is to treat these ideas in a different manner than has usually been the case. It is to move from Freud's text itself to an interpretation of that text. Such an interpretation stresses that these are possible ways of representing sexual experience but not the only ways. It also recognizes that this is not a scientific theory that links psychoanalysis with neurology or biology despite Freud's occasional expression of such hopes. And, finally, it recognizes that the metaphors of the theory conceal the lingering presence of old prejudices.

Since our approach has been "psychoanalytic," that is, since I have been treating these theories as analogous with the fantasies of a neurosis, it remains to offer some speculations for their persistence and continual reemergence. One can point to several "manifest" or "conscious" reasons for the persistence of these ideas. Freud was trained in a natural science tradition and retained a certain allegiance to the beliefs of that tradition. Both the physicalist language of libido theory and the return to biological speculations reflect the effects of that background. Perhaps of greater importance, attempts to link the new field of psychoanalysis with science gave it a certain respectability and prestige by association. It was hard enough to stand forth as the man who talked about the sex life of infants, who took dreams seriously and who probed into areas that respectable people would never speak about; at least it could be done under the mantle of science. And, finally, there were Freud's scientific ambitions; he often puts forth wide-sweeping, "powerful" hypotheses: all dreams are wish fulfillments, all anxiety is dammed up sexual excitation, one "biological force"--sexuality, libido--is the cause of all human action. His discovery of the role of sexuality in the neuroses, and his attempt to frame it as a single broad casual force--linked up with conventional science through the metapsychology--is part of this search for the psychoanalytic laws of gravity.

While all these factors played some part in the persistence of conventional metaphors and images they do not, it seems to me, account for the hold of these ideas, their failure to change with reality

testing--new clinical observations--or the non-logical fluidity with which the the theoretical language is used. All these belie an additional source of motivation, an unconscious source.

Using the new method of psychoanalysis, Freud found himself confronted with the painful underside of modern society: the exploitation of women; the corruption of love and pleasure; the mistreatment of children in the most respectable--the "nicest"-- of families; death and loss, so badly mourned, so incompletely dealt with; and madness--insanity itself--with its terrifying fears and disruptive results. The neurotics he worked with were, in this sense, the victims of civilized progress, their unconscious conflicts--and his own as he came to see in his self-analysis--contained the symbolic record of their victimization.

Now when one confronts a truth like this, a truth that most members of respectable society have a stake in denying, one can adopt a revolutionary stance and tell others of the realities they dare not face, or one can go along with the prevailing rationalizations. Freud does both. On the one hand, he confronts his culture with its own denied secrets and develops a method which provides access to the disguised, covered-over, or unconscious side of life. And he formulates a critical theory about this secret realm: it is driven by sexuality--a sexuality in which love has been corrupted by anxiety, guilt and painful symptoms. Concurrently, he constructs a scientific appearing theory that turns away from painful human experience, from socially induced conflict and, in effect, blames all on sex and instinct themselves. If there are conflicts in the unconscious, if

neurotics suffer disturbances in their sexual lives, it is because human instincts are antisocial, selfish and narcissistic.[9] In this second view, sexuality becomes a scapegoat, just as women, children, and the "feminine" side of men were scapegoats. It is in this way that the metaphors of the theory of sexuality are a return of the repressed, driven by guilt. While the main force of Freud's work has been to liberate us from just this baleful legacy, parts of this theory, like the symptoms of a neurosis, perpetuate old conflicts in disguised form. As such, they run counter to the essential psychoanalytic spirit of inquiry, awareness and insight.

FOOTNOTES

1. The ideas discussed in this essay are elaborated in a different form in my book: Freud's Unfinished Journey: Conventional and Critical Perspectives in Psychoanalytic Theory. (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.) I want to thank the following friends and colleagues for their comments and criticism of an earlier draft of this paper: Stuart Ende, David James Fisher, Nancy Hayles, Victoria Hamilton, Herbert Morris, Joseph Natterson, Robert Rosenstone, and Randolph Splitter.

2. In their compendium, The Language of Psychoanalysis, Laplanche & Pontalis define libido as:

> Energy postulated by Freud as underlying the transformation of the sexual instinct with respect to its object (displacement of cathexes), with respect to its aim (e.g. sublimation), and with respect to the source of sexual excitation (diversity of the erotogenic zones). (1973, p. 239).

3. Taylor (1954) presents a theory of the oscillations between what he terms "patrist" and "matrist" orientations. The patrist is politically authoritarian, sexually repressive, gives low status to women and things deemed feminine--emotion, expressiveness, play, dance--and worships a male or father deity. The matrist is the reverse, a female or mother deity is worshipped, there is a more open expression of emotion and sexuality and much less control: social, religious, or personal. See also his account of English

history during the period 1750-1850 (1958). Stone's The Family Sex and Marriage (1977) is a recent, well-documented historical account, noting the same sort of oscillation. Much evidence on the treatment--and mistreatment--of infants and children is presented in the volume edited by de Mause (1974) though the reader must ignore the hyperbole. See also Barker-Benfield (1978), Despert (1965), Hunt (1970) and Schatzman (1973).

4. One of the origins of Freud's personal feelings of guilt, discovered in his self-analysis and reported to Fliess in 1897, stemmed from his experience with his nurse" . . . the old woman who provided me at such an early age with the means for living and surviving. You see how the old liking breaks through again." (p. 220). This "shrewd old woman," to whom the young Freud was strongly attached, was caught stealing toys and money, fired and sent to prison. In the analysis of his dreams Freud discovers both the anxiety over the loss of this substitute mother--a common event in the days of wet-nurses and other temporary caretakers--and his own feelings of guilt arising from an identification with her. We see here, just the tip of the iceberg of conflict arising from a social system of devalued women, substitute mothers, servants seeking revenge through indirect means, and related phenomena. It is interesting to reread Freud's female cases, from the Studies on Hysteria on, with this set of social values in mind. The reactions of servant girls and governnesses (Katherine and Lucy R. in The Studies), or daughters used in such capacities (Anna O. and Dora), can be related to

the frustrations of their devalued social position.

5. Even as he puts forth this "physical" hypotheses to explain depression he does so with words--"loss" "mourning"--that foreshadows his later, psychological theory. This later theory contains central psychoanalytic insights: the role of loss of love, of love objects and blocked mourning in depression.

6. Though the thrust of Civilization and Its Discontents takes a very different direction as I attempt to show in Chapter 6 of Freud's Unfinished Journey.

7. A colleague, Nancy Hayles, has pointed out how male sexual physiology is the implicit basis for the larger theory of sexuality. As she puts it

> The idea that libido is limited in quantity, the emphasis on "channels" which can be blocked or free, in fact the whole hydrodynamic imagery is directly related to male sexual physiology. The "fluid" which can be dammed up or flow freely surely has, as one of its metaphorical progenitors, seminal emission. Similarly, that there is just so much of this fluid, and that if you spend it one way you can't another, also relates to the recovery intervals males experience after emission. That male sexual response is the model for the theory is never explicitly stated, indeed, to state it would have been to render the underlying patriarchal assumptions conscious and therefore subject to question and scrutiny.

> But one can appreciate just how formative the male model is for the theory by imagining what Freud would have postulated had he been a woman. If female physiology had had been taken as normative, her theory might have posited a synergistic rather than conservative model, imagining a flow of libido that builds the more it is released.

8. Freud's own attitude towards his quasi-biological theories is mixed. For example, he begins Chapter 4 of Beyond the Pleasure Principle by noting

> What follows is speculation, often far-fetched speculation which the reader will consider or dismiss according to his individual predilection. (p. 24).

Yet, at other times, he yearns for the certainties and "solid ground" of biology.

9. It is instructive to examine Freud's treatment of pain in Beyond the Pleasure Principle in the light of the present interpretation. He begins with the familiar physicalistic metaphors

> We have decided to relate pleasure and unpleasure to the quantity of excitation that is present in the mind but is not in any way `bound;' and to relate them in such a manner that unpleasure corresponds to an increase in the quantity of excitation and pleasure to a diminuation. (p. 7-8).

He then moves "beyond" this pleasure principle with the well-known

account of the infant who plays at throwing his toys away and retrieving them to master the trauma of his mother's absence. Here, the pain is that caused by the loss of a loved and needed other person; what will later become the primary anxiety of separation. Freud develops further examples of psychological pain, describing the repression of infantile sexuality in the following terms

> That efflorescence (of childhood sexuality and ambition) comes to an end in the most distressing circumstances and to the accompaniment of the most painful feelings. Loss of love and failure leave behind them a permanent injury to self-regard in the form of a narcissistic scar, which . . . contributes more than anything to the `sense of inferiority' which is so common in neurotics. (p. 20-21).

Pain as loss of love, as humiliation, narcissistic injury and sense of inferiority, came from the heart of psychoanalytic experience and point the way to new insights and discoveries. But, in the very next chapter, Freud shifts away from all this and puts forth his "biological" hypothesis of the death instinct--the tendency to repeat inherent in all organic substance--which recasts the repetitions due to painful human experiences in impersonal terms. Late in the essay he says: "Biology is truly a land of unlimited possibilities." (p. 60). Would that it were, though who can blame Freud for taking a respite from the painful realities encountered in the unconscious in this land of fantasy-theory.

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